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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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VIOLENT CRIME RATE IN 2007 AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL IN 2005

WASHINGTON – In 2007, the violent crime rate in the United States was at about the level of 2005, and the property crime rate was somewhat below the 2005 estimate, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics announced today. Comparisons were made between the rates for 2005 and 2007, as 2006 was an atypical year due to the impact of methodological changes made to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

Violent and property crime rates in 2007 were at or near the lowest levels recorded since 1973, the first year that such data were available. The violent and property crime rates fell during the previous 10 years (1998-2007), though most of the declines occurred within the first five years. In 2007, the violent crime rate (20.7 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) was 43 percent lower than the rate in 1998, and the property crime rate (146.5 per 1,000 households) was 33 percent lower than in 1998.

Forty-six percent of all violent victimizations and 37 percent of all property crimes were reported to the police, while 66 percent of robbery and 57 percent of aggravated assaults were reported.

During 2007, U.S. residents age 12 and older experienced an estimated 23 million crimes of violence and theft. Males experienced 22 violent victimizations per 1,000 males age 12 or older, while females experienced 19 violent victimizations per 1,000 females age 12 or older. Blacks experienced somewhat higher rates of violence (24 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) than whites (20 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older).

Of offenders victimizing males in 2007, three percent were described as intimates and 50 percent as strangers. In contrast, 23 percent of offenders victimizing females were described as intimates and 28 percent as strangers. An estimated 20 percent of all violent crime incidents were committed by an armed offender, with a firearm being involved in seven percent of all violent crime incidents.

(MORE)

A number of methodological changes were introduced to the NCVS in 2006 and 2007. The changes in 2006 included introducing a new sample to account for shifts in population and location of households that occur over time, incorporating responses from households that were in the survey for the first time, and using computer-assisted personal interviewing. Three additional changes implemented in 2007 included a 14 percent sample reduction, using first-time interviews in the production of 2007 estimates, and discontinuing computer-assisted interviewing from centralized telephone centers.

The introduction of the new sample most notably affected the survey estimates in rural areas that were added in 2006, and required hiring and training a large number of new interviewers. The 2007 methodological changes had relatively small effects upon the estimates. The effects of the sample redesign and mode of interview made in 2006 were reduced in 2007, enabling comparisons between 2007 and 2005 estimates, as well as previous years.

The report, Criminal Victimization, 2007, (NCJ-224390) was written by BJS statistician Michael Rand. Following publication, the report can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv07.htm>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. In addition, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.

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